

REMARKS

The present request is submitted in response to the final Office Action dated January 11, 2008, which set a three-month period for response, and with the initial two-month period for response expiring on March 11, 2008.

Claims 1-11 and 13 are pending in this application.

In the final Office Action, claims 1-11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-10, 11, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,508,571 to Shafer in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,339,871 to Maesoba and U.S. Patent No. 6,707,211 to Oohashi as well as over Maesoba in view of Shafer and Oohashi,

In the present amendment, claim 1 has been amended to address the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, by clarifying the steps of the claimed method and specifically addressing the Examiner's comments on pages 2-3 of the final rejection.

The Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 more clearly defines the above-argued patentable distinctions and that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-13 are allowable over the cited reference combinations. It is respectfully submitted that since the prior art does not suggest the desirability of the claimed invention, such art cannot establish a prima facie case of obviousness as clearly set forth in MPEP section 2143.01.

Neither Maesoba nor Oohashi discloses a connecting ring which together with the axial ends forms a winding of an integrated star point. Schafer may show a connecting ring 24, however, the winding of the electrical machine does not have a winding head. The winding of Schafer also does not have pre-stamped or pre-crossed or pre-offset wire elements, but instead is directly wound onto the stator. The flexible wire ends, therefore, are introduced in the axial extension of the stator into the "conductor slots 26" of the insulator 22 and in the "connecting ring 24", as shown in Fig. 6 of Schafer. Thus, the connecting ring 24 is not disposed radially within a winding head, rather connects directly axially to the winding on the stator.

With the arrangement of the connecting ring 40 radially within the inside 41 of the winding head 20, as defined in amended claim 1, the overall installation length of the winding 32 is reduced. In addition, additional insulation elements, such as plastic masks on the ends of the windings can be eliminated, as discussed in the specification of the present application.

The practitioner, with knowledge of the stamping and offsetting methods of Maesoba or Oohashi, would not use the teachings of Schafer, since this reference discloses a completely different winding principle. The Applicants further submit that such a combination constitutes impermissible hindsight, since a combination of Schafer with either Oohashi or Maesoba would not teach or suggest a connecting ring for an integrated star point, which is disposed radially within the inside of a winding head. The subject matter of claim 1 and its

dependent claims therefore is not unpatentable over the cited reference combinations.

The application in its amended state is believed to be in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited. However, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Striker', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

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